Words of Madness / Female Worlds:Hysteria as Intertextual Discourse of Women's Deviance in *Jane Eyre*

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This paper aims to accomplish the following objectives: locate instances of female madness or hysteria in Charlotte Brontë's novel as illustrative of women's deviance and otherness; outline the evolving nature of critical interpretations of madness in *Jane Eyre* from Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, to Helen Small, analyse the way(s) female madness is constructed through discourse strategies in the novel, and interpret *Jane Eyre* as a narrative through which female hysteria is constructed and deconstructed through intertextual discourse.

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The meaning of what it is to be a woman in a patriarchal society has traditionally placed women within the domain of illness and pathology. Scientific and cultural practices have adopted madness as a signifier, as a means to position women within a social order and as a form of social regulation. From a Foucaldian perspective, madness can be interpreted as a discourse, as "a regulated system of statements" with a particular history (Ussher 1991: 12). Thus, the truth about madness will depend upon the dominant discourse that prevails at a given time and place. In a patriarchal society, the discourse of madness acts as a signifier, locating women as the Other within a phallocentric discourse, thus depriving them of power, privilege and independence (Ussher 1991: 7). However, in Foucault's seminal volume of *Madness and Civilisation* (1961), the role of gender and sexual difference is not taken into account in order to interpret the discourse of madness. On this topic, Showalter (1987) claimed that, in order to supply gender analysis in the history of madness, we should turn to a different set of cultural sources such as narratives, diaries, women's memoirs and novels (6). In this way, female worlds, as female texts, often become entangled with words of madness, as female insanity, traditionally known as hysteria, arises as an intertextual discourse of women's deviance which is shared through a multiplicity of texts.

In this respect, critical writing about nineteenth-century female madness has lately been dominated by the precedent set by *Jane Eyre*, but especially, by evolutionary readings of the epitomised Victorian female hysterical Bertha Mason. For many literary critics, Bertha Mason represented a bizarre incorporation of a gothic figure within the domain of otherwise realistic domestic fiction, until she became the embodiment of rebellion and rage within the woman writer's unconscious in later readings. Bertha has often been interpreted as a Victorian

reinterpretation of the madwoman as a result of unrequited love, a Victorian reworking of the Renaissance Ophelia. Feminist readings have exalted Bertha as the epitome of the madwoman as a result of patriarchy. Marxist interpretations have focused on Bertha as an embodiment of the working-class afflicted by a capitalist Master. Within the discourse of post-colonialism, Bertha, given her Caribbean and Creole origins, has been read as a female Caliban, imprisoned as a slave, while subjugated at her master's commands. More recent feminist interpretations, influenced by psychoanalytic analysis of the human being, produced one of the most popular interpretations attached to Bertha Mason as the heroine's double in a dual sense: as Jane's suppressed desire, thus acknowledging Jane's capacity to feel sexual arousal, or as Jane's dark side, thus impliying Jane's conscious efforts to negate her sexuality. As a legacy of all these multiple, and not mutually exclusive readings of Brontë's madwoman, postmodern interpretations have brought back the focus of analysis to the original text itself, revising multiple layers of meaning through intertextual readings of the text, through several strategies such as evaluating the cultural evolution of critical readings of Bertha as a character, focusing on a discourse analysis of Bertha's description in the text mediated through both Rochester and Jane, and finally, the relevance of the nineteenth-century discourse of female madness as the context to locate these different analyses.

In her volume *Desire and Domestic Fiction*, Nancy Armstrong (1987) argued that the presence of deranged women in domestic novels came in vogue during the decade of the 1840s, as a result of English rural political grievances dramatised through literary displays of sexual ourbursts. Nonetheless, Helen Small (1996) referred to the mass of earlier material on female lunacy (140), especially the figure of the love-mad woman epitomised by Ophelia, exalted and brought back to life in Victorian times due to the revival of medieval times. Actually, the different historical readings attached to Bertha Mason disclose the evolution of the way female madness has been interpreted through the course of literary fiction. If political grievances were firstly evoked to interpret hysteria within an otherwise apparently peaceful context, they were lately recovered by Freudian interpretations pointing at the return of the repressed.

Despite the earlier presence of female lunatics in previous works of fiction, as Small contends, few novelists produced anything comparable to Charlotte Brontë's description of female insanity (142). Labelled as a writer of domestic fiction, Brontë's *Jane Eyre* raised concern among reviewers due to its failure to exhibit the moral standards that were often expected in that kind of genre. Moreover, as Sally Shuttleworth (1987) has noticed, Brontë's novel was highlighted because of the author's interest in the progress of medical knowledge, which progressively implied Brontë's move away from a romantic view to a more mature realism, using nineteenth-century medical writing to support ideas about insanity, and by extension, insurrection. It is through this tension of opposites that Bertha Mason is released as a figure in *Jane Eyre*, when nature clashes with the preternatual, romanticism with realism, and tragedy with everyday life. Bertha has often been perceived as a Marxist epitome of political insurrection, as the Freudian return of the repressed, as the gothic supressed in domestic fiction. And yet, Bertha is more than that. As Small recently noticed, Bertha has been locked away in the attic of Thornfield Hall for ten years, thus she is necessarily out of touch with time, and correspondingly outmoded, more attached to late eighteenth-century romance than Victorian domestic realism (157). Actually, as a character, Bertha's precedent is thought to be Sir Walter Scott's Ulrica the Saxon.

One of the most obvious entanglements of Bertha Mason with political radicalism and feminist conviction has focused on a passage including the passionate outburst of the madwoman's laughter. Bertha's laugh, not entirely unlike the Medusa's, has often been interpreted as madness as a "a mode of rebellion against the constraints of patriarchy" (Small 160). And yet, late ideological and feminist readings of Bertha Mason as embodiments of

rebellion often hamper Brontë's possibility to endow the novel with a romantic reading; an interpretation that would be more plausible within the context of Victorian domestic fiction. All in all, Brontë's novel has often been read as a mixture of romantic and realistic threads within a Victorian domestic context, readapting late eighteenth-century features from the classic gothic novel to incorporate them into the more realistic genre of the Victorian domestic novel (Heilmann 1958; Macpherson 1989). In this respect, according to Helen Small, Bertha's laughter implies an acute psychological danger of the discontent that agitates the heroine, an expression of Jane's frustrated desire (160). And yet, one must take into account Brontë's discussion on female rebellion through the uncovered discourse of madness which must be contextualised in a predominantly conservative background. After all, Jane arises as a heroine respectful of her duties once she has undergone the process of self-acquaintance and has attained maturity.

Coexisting with feminist critical readings which interpreted Bertha as the embodiment of sexual frustration or feminist rebellion, Peter Grudin rather interpreted *Jane Eyre* as "a didactic novel which subordinates the values of passion to those of restraint" (145). In this sense, Grudin's most important and innovative thesis is that he locates the moral weight of the novel in Bertha Mason, as she becomes the moral basis of the story. Even before Gubar and Gilbert interpreted Bertha as Jane's double, Grudin had already referred to Bertha as "the representation of something unspeakable and as a projection of Jane's own dark potentials" (145). Despite the apparently similar interpretations, they both reach a different conclusion. Gubar and Gilbert interpret Bertha as Jane's suppressed desire, Bertha thus becoming an amalgamation of the passion Jane needs to suppress to conform to social and moral standards. Nonetheless, Grudin interprets Bertha as a surveyor, as the gothic figure who shows why Jane must act as she does. In this respect, according to Grudin, *Jane Eyre* belongs to the tradition of Victorian domestic novels, while Gubar and Gilbert incorporated Brontë's novel in the feminist tradition of Victorian fiction. Grudin's critical reading also favours the connection between madness and immorality, taking for granted that, in the Victorian context, licentious women were often termed insane. Grudin's interpretation argues that the real 'mad' figure is Jane, while Bertha functions as a reminder of the results Jane's dissolute actions may cause. It is in this sense that, for the very first time, Bertha is interpreted as a moral examiner rather than the madwoman as had been traditionally termed. Jane's feelings of social alienation through her observation of and about the mirror, and her sinking back into unconsciousness when she was a child prove her mental disorder. In this respect, it is worth recalling Mr Lloyd's prescription after examining Jane at Gateshead once she had lost consciousness, suggesting a change in air and scene because Jane's nerves were not in a good state. The doctor's picture of Jane as mentally disturbed seems corroborated by Jane's defiance of older, and often, male authorities. Her rebellion condemns her from a medical, religious, and moral perspective, often considering her to be insane, pagan, and immoral. And yet, despite the fact some interpretations have focused on Jane as the 'real' madwoman, most critical readings have taken for granted that Bertha, despite being a minor figure whose presence is only explicitly mentioned in a few chapters, arises as the madwoman in sharp contrast with the modest heroine Jane, especially when her childish outbursts have been left behind.

According to Lerner (1989), Bertha Mason has become one of the major characters in English fiction (273), not only granting her a major role in Brontë's novel, but also exalting her as a representative figure of the suppressed voices. If Bertha has become such a major figure despite her status as a minor character in Brontë's novel it is precisely because her presence serves the purpose of establishing contrasts and parallelisms between the two major characters in the story, Jane and Rochester, and herself. In this respect, in line with early psychoanalytical theories, Helen Moglen regards Bertha as the monstrous embodiment of psychosexual conflicts for both Jane and Rochester. In this sense, Bertha's tearing of the veil

on the night prior to the wedding equals sexual violation. For Jane, Bertha represents her fear to surrender to male authority and desire, while for Rochester, she embodies the ambivalence of the Byronic hero towards his own sexuality. Similarly, Judith Williams also identified the link between Jane's fantasies and Bertha Mason, drawing attention to the specifically hierarchical distribution at Thornfield, where Bertha is relegated to the third story, the realm of the unreal, that is, both Rochester's and Jane's unconscious nature. Moreover, Robert Keefe also underlined the psychoanalytical importance of Bertha as a character, as she represents Jane's Oedipal rival, preventing her from marrying Rochester. All these readings share both a psychoanalytical background and a general interpretation of Bertha as the embodiment of sexual desire as repressed in Jane, in Rochester, or ultimately, in both.

Taking psychoanalytic theories as a point of departure, Carolyn G. Heilbrun also regarded Bertha as an epitome of repression, but she shifted the focus of attention from sexual desire to mere anger and rebellion. As she contends, "Bertha now represents not sexual desire but anger, not the repressed element in the respectable woman, but the suppressed element in the unemancipated woman" (quoted in Lerner 275). Heilbrun's innovative thesis is that Bertha's anger can only be attributed to her parallel relation with Jane linked to her subjected condition as a woman, so that Rochester is left behind. In due time, Gilbert and Gubar will fuse the psychoanalytical readings mentioned above, and Heilbrun's innovative reading of Bertha's as the epitome of female anger and rebellion, thus interpreting Bertha as Jane's alter ego, embodying both her suppressed sexual desire as a Victorian heroine, and her latent rebellious anger as an unemancipated woman. For both Gilbert and Gubar, Bertha becomes an avatar, she does what Jane wants to do, functioning as Jane's dark double during her stay at Thornfield.

Thus, as a way to question and update Gilbert's and Gubar's interpretation of Bertha as Jane's alter ego, implying that Jane's complexity as a character can be retrieved through discourse analysis, Small points at the battle of wills Jane experiences through her process of growth. Similarly, Hugues (1964) already pointed out Jane's own complexity as a character of her own, noticing the presence of both Dionysiac and Apollonian forces. Twenty-five years after the publication of *Jane Eyre*, Nietzsche had published his volume *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik*, in which he referred to certain states of human experience. In this respect, he distinguished between the Dionysiac, as "the frenzied, demonic, and unrestrained", and the Apollonian as "the ordered, rational, and disciplined" (Hugues 347).

Taking this different set of forces, Hugues referred to two levels underlying Charlotte Brontë's novel: the first of these levels is the schizophrenic, as Jane presents two different personalities which render her necessarily mad, while the second of these levels is defined as the ritual, through which Jane becomes the meeting ground between Dionysos and Apollo. In this respect, Hugues traces the evolution of this battle of forces in *Jane Eyre* throughout the female protagonist's progress. In Gateshead, Jane suffers from acute melancholia, despondency, and depression as a result of humiliation, her physical inferiority, and her exclusion from the Reeds family. According to Hugues, one of the classic symptoms of neurosis is lack of self-identification, as Jane becomes aware of her condition as dispossessed. Deprived of a family and a position, she is unable to recognise who she really is. Given these neurotic traits, it is at this stage she falls an easy prey to self-induced catalepsy in the redroom episode. The real world has rejected her, and so she feels willing to withdraw into a ghostly sphere, escaping into the unreal. As Hugues concludes, in the first section of the novel, Jane learns the ways to become "a Bacchante, a worshipper of Dionysos" (351).

Jane gradually becomes disentangled from the underworld in Lowood, mainly through her acquaintance with Miss Temple and Helen Burns, who both aid Jane to acquire a temporary identity. Miss Temple's personality and her influence over Jane involve the presence of the

Apollonian spirit as opposed to the former overwhelming presence of Dyonisos. Consequently, Jane learns self-control and knowledge of the self at this stage. Similarly, Helen Burns, through her Christian resignation, also encourages Jane to follow the proper path to establish order and discipline in her life. And yet, after Helen's death, when Jane is becoming a mature woman, the Dionysiac spirit begins to stir again. It is at this transitional moment that Jane arrives at Thornfield, where she will become a Bacchante again and will be forced to confront Dyonisos again. At Thornfield, Jane becomes acquainted with the embodiment of the dark god, Dionysos himself, Rochester (Hugues 355), who personifies two of Dyonisos' most salient traits: eroticism and denial of self-knowledge, as Jane feels attracted to him, and Rochester asks Jane to surrender her identity and join him. The redroom episode in Gateshead is echoed in the attic scenes at Thornfield, thus setting a parallelism between the two sections of the novel.

According to Nietzsche, the knowledge of Apollo rests on a basis of suffering. If Jane had learned the ways of the Apollonian spirit in Lowood, now she becomes acquainted with it through St. John Rivers, who rejects the power of the earth and the eroticism connected with the earth. Moreover, he presents the chief quality of the Apollonian state, as he offers Jane an identity. And yet, Jane feels something is missing in this blissful Apollonian state of affairs. Jane realises that Apollo alone is incomplete, and feels unable to disregard the important, and necessary, presence of Dyonisos to counterbalance the different set of forces. Both Apollo and Dyonisos must be acknowledged, and they are in the last section of the novel, when Jane finds out Rochester remains Dyonisos, but he now appears as a mutilated Dyonisos, that is, as the Orphic version of Dyonisos. The devotees of Orpheus retained the Bacchic ritual, but also insisted on ceremonies of purification (Hugues 362). In this respect, Hugues contends that Jane's madness, Jane's schizophrenia, or coexistence of different personalities in one single human being, implies the ritualistic symbol of the battle between Dionysiac and Apollonian forces. Thus, *Jane Eyre* could not only be interpreted as a psychological novel, but as a symbolic text which amalgamates psychology, religion, history, and anthropology, thus implying the way madness, or mental disorders, are interpreted as cultural, rather than merely pychological, or psychiatric, issues.

Between psychoanalysis and feminist readings, postcolonial and new historicist theories became concerned with granting voices to those who had been repressed in the history of times. Jean Rhys' Neo-Victorian, and thus twentieth-century, reintepretation of Brontë's *Jane Eyre* presented a readaptation of the original text focusing on Antoinette Cosway, Brontë's Bertha, as the main protagonist. Thus, from Brontë's third story at Thornfield and her awkward position at the margins of the text, Bertha is virtually granted a central location on the stage in postcolonial texts given her West Indian origins. As Lerner contends, Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* became a favourite text in discussions of intertextuality because of its symbiotic nature with Brontë's novel. Taking for granted T.S.Eliot's affirmation in "Tradition and the Individual Talent", Rhys' novel illustrated the fact that a new work of art alters the meaning of all previous works. Following Gérad Génette's terminology, Rhys's readaptation would be an example of hypertextuality, as it is regarded as a literary work which is parasitic on a previous one. Rhys introduced major changes in Brontë's novel such as the fact Bertha's name is actually Antoinette and is changed to Bertha by Rochester, Jane is virtually removed from the plot, and Antoinette is presented as a victim rather than as a madwoman. In this respect, critics such as Michael Thrope have argued that Jean Rhys' novel becomes an implicit comment on the shortcoming of *Jane Eyre*. Within this context, postcolonialist readings of *Jane Eyre* have shifted the focus of attention to the Victorian imperialistic discourse, taking for granted that the politics of imperialism provides the discursive field for Jane's rise in status, and Bertha's neglect as a member of the West Indian colonies. And yet, despite the fact that Bertha-Antoinette represents the colonial subject, in this context Spivak also argued that,

as is shown in Rhys's novel, Bertha remains a Creole in her own community, thus representing the exploiters, not the exploited, so that she is caught in a double bind as she is neither accepted in her own colonial community nor in the imperialistic English metropolis. In this respect, not entirely unlike Jane in Brontë's novel, Antoinette becomes a social alien in both communities, as Jane as a governess is also caught between different social classes (Macpherson 1989). Thus, so far Lerner identified three schools of thought as regards Bertha: Bertha as representing Jane's repressed sexual desire (psychoanalysis), Bertha as representing Jane's suppressed anger (feminism), and Bertha-Antoinette as representing the colonial subject (postcolonialism) (279).

And yet, all these critical analyses have often recovered and updated former interpretations of Bertha as a character, pointing at several aspects of textual and discourse analysis, carefully selecting specific episodes to illutrate their main theses. In this sense, different interpretations attached to Bertha Mason, and by extension, to the female lunacy condition she represents, have focused on specific details of Bertha's magnanimous description once Rochester unfolds her presence in the novel:

> In the deep shade, at the further end of the room, a figure ran backwards and forwards. What it was, whether beast or human being, one could not, at first sight, tell: it grovelled, seemingly, on all fours; it snatched and growled like some strange wild animal: but it was covered with clothing; and a quantity of dark, grizzled hair, wild as a mane, hid its head and face. (307).

Many critics often quote this description to highlight the inhuman portrait of female insanity. Bertha is presumed to display a wide range of zoological traits with a view to emphasise the madwoman's reduction to bestiality. In this respect, Small sets a parallelism between Bertha's description and that of the hyena in Pliny's *Natural History*, noticing that the hyena is widely believed to be bisexual and become male and female in alternate years (159). If Bertha's animalistic traits have been traditionally used to highlight the inhuman nature of the lunatic at the time, other episodes have been carefully selected to prove political and ideological readings of the novel. Gayatri Spivak, Penny Bouhmela, and Susan Meyer also drew attention to the racist undertones implied in the description of Mrs Rochester. In addition to nineteenth-century medical texts, Brontë also indulged in anthropological writing of the time, together with gothic German texts, which led her to present a portrait of Bertha as a being tainted with features of the beast, the savage, and the ravenant, all of them entangled into the undefinable and inscrutable figure of the madwoman.

Bertha's disgusting appearance, constructed through Brontë's text and especially Rochester's narrative, is in line with the revulsion many medical writings of the time expressed towards a specific kind of madness. As Helen Small contends in one of the most recent intepretations of Bertha Mason to date, Bertha fits within doctor J.C.Prichard's category of moral insanity. According to Victorian theories of the mind, the locus of rationality was thought to emerge from the will. Actually, the will was often a synonym for the mind in Victorian times, and it was often the case that both women and so-called 'savages' were perceived to be more vulnerable to this type of madness, moral insanity, as in both cases, their will was assumed to be remarkably weak. A healthy state of mind implied a conscious exercise of the will, and this, consequently, was considered as related to moral issues. A sane person was assumed to be morally incorruptible, otherwise he or she was threatened to be labelled as mad, insane, immoral. As Helen Small notices, Charlotte Brontë's familiarity with the definition of moral insanity is proved through a letter she wrote to W.S.Williams: "There is a phase of insanity which may be called moral madness, in which all that is good or even human seems to disappear from the mind […] Mrs Rochester indeed lived a sinful life before she was insane, but sin is itself a species of insanity" (quoted in Small 164-5). Moreover, when Rochester unfolds the story of his marriage to Bertha, he closely specifies each symptom included in Prichard's description of moral insanity. Rochester refers to a woman

who carries both mental and moral corruption in her blood; a kind of madness that, meaningfully, reverberates through the female line and becomes more virulent in women. It is important to notice that the descrption of Bertha's viciousness and dissolute life is meditated through Rochester, that is, through her afflicted husband who presents himself as a victim of both his father and Bertha's brother.

Moreover, Rochester's tale is incorporated in the story through Jane's recollection as a mature narrator. Through temporal distance, Jane brings back her memories of her husband-to-be's narrative. Thus, as readers, we know Bertha's story through a double mediation: Jane's memories as a mature narrator, and Rochester's account of a personal story. Rochester states he never loved Bertha because she is mad. In turn, Jane, despite the fact she elopes once the truth is disclosed, never questions Rochester's story, and yet she refers to Bertha as an "unfortunate lady" on one occasion. In this respect, Jane's observation was recovered by feminist critics to emphasise Jane's sympathy with her alter ego. Personal stories, memories and temporal distance entangle to provide a portrait of Bertha, whose own voice is never heard except through her outrageous laughter, an echo coming down from the third story. As readers, we are only allowed to hear Bertha's laughter from afar, but her echo reverberates all across Thornfield and her presence is noticed as that of a spectre, a ghost enabled to dismantle physical limitations. Due to Bertha's latent presence, feminist critics have emphasised her importance as a character, despite the fact that she was originally considered a minor figure in Brontë's text, as a brief remnant of gothic fiction lurking in a Victorian domestic novel. As a result, Jean Rhys' novel *Wide Sargasso Sea* granted Bertha an important status as the protagonist embodying transcendence, questioned Rochester's denial of love towards his first wife, and relegated Jane to a secondary role in the text.

According to Lerner, recent criticism of Charlotte Brontë's novel has drawn attention to the fact that Bertha, on whom so much interpretation has been bestowed, is merely a minor character (280). Lerner seems to detect such amount of critical analysis as focused on Bertha as a result of Stanley Fish's theories of interpretative communities that derived meaning entirely from the readers. According to new criticism, meaning is constructed through the interaction between text and reader, so that the meaning of a text as unequivocal is perceived as no longer applicable. In this respect, Lerner identifies the reasons why Bertha has lately overshadowed the main characters in Brontë's novels precisely due to the importance attached to critical readings instead of primarily focusing on the original text. Lerner contends critics have often unpacked the implicit meaning of the book, they have imposed a meaning which the text does not explicitly contain, and eventually, the critic has often filled in the silences of the text (282). According to Lerner, the parallelism traditionally established between Jane and Bertha is rooted on no firm ground since, thourgh textual analysis, their relation is established through juxtaposition, neither coordination nor subordination, and mediated through Rochester's text. Lerner notices that, as readers, we are not granted enough insight into Bertha's consciouness to ascertain her nature and personality. We only hear her echoes and know about her though other characters' texts, we are never confronted with Bertha's own words, only her laughter.

Moreover, Lerner also questions Gilbert's and Gubar's precedent as regards Bertha as Jane's double, or alter ego. In this sense, Bertha may be interpreted as a possible double. And yet, she is not the only double Jane encounters through her process of growth. In an innovative reading of Brontë's novel, David Cecil (1934) already pointed at the fact that most of its characters are "revelations of the same self" (167). Jane becomes acquainted with several models from which she acquires specific traits that will ultimately give way to her own identity. In this respect, Brontë's novel was also traditionally interpreted as a symbolic journey (Scargill 1950). Helen Burns represents the obedience Jane feels unable to surmount; Miss Temple becomes the absent mother figure and the professional aspirations which will

grant Jane knowledge and independence; Mrs Reed discloses Jane's urge for self-punishment; St. John Rivers reveals Jane's inclination towards duty, and especially, Rochester, much more than Bertha, represents Jane's sexual desire, and ultimately, Jane's fear of sexuality once he is figuratively rendered impotent through the purgatory fire at Thornfield. In this respect, all the characters merge into one another to become entangled in Jane's personality. In this respect, Lerner claims that "to see Bertha as Jane's double is […] fitfully true, but not in a way that grants her any special status as the double for Jane" (295). After all, Bertha remains a minor figure in Brontë's novel, although given her spectral nature, her presense is echoed throughout the pages of the text.

Thus, recent critical readings, mainly through postmodern theories, have set a balance between early dismissal and later prominence of Bertha as a character. Small has noticed that, "to read Bertha Mason as the heroine's dark double (an interpretation that has dominated criticism of the novel since *The Madwoman in the Attic*) is to distort a book which so emphatically asserts their alterity" (167). Gilbert's and Gubar's main thesis lies in Rochester's introduction to both Bertha and Jane through this manner: "That is my wife," said he, "and this is what I wished to have." The link Rochester imposes over these two women was recovered by feminist critics to forge an inner connection between Bertha and Jane, between the deranged fallen woman and the dutiful angel of the house. And yet, as Small contends, "the novel asks us to take Rochester at his word: to look at the two women in order to find in them an absolute difference" (167). Going back to Victorian theories of the mind, Bertha and Jane are inherently different women because Jane is in possession of her will, she is morally sane, while Bertha's will is lacking. Nonetheless, despite both character's inner difference due to their sanity, postmodern readings reject any facile structuralist pairings of Jane as superego and Bertha as id (King 1986). They might be different characters, but each of them does not represent the bright and the dark side, but rather both spheres of the human psyche. In this respect, Bertha cannot be dismissed as entirely mad, and Jane may not be termed entirely sane. As many examples of the Bildungsroman plot may illustrate, the protagonist, Jane in this case, is necessarily caught in a battle of wills. Her rebellious nature in Gateshead with the Reed family is tamed in Lockwood, where she learns the way to control her will, that is, her sanity, her morality. Nonetheless, her bellicose nature emerges and her will weakens in Thornfield, where love and desire threaten Jane to lose control over herself. In this sense, at heart, she begins to take part in the conventions of the love-madwoman. She indulges in long walks in the midst of wild nature, she looks at herself in the mirror, she hears echoes all through the house, she is attracted towards forbidden places, and she gains insight into her dismal position as a governess which will prevent her from attaining love. Consequently, Jane fears Rochester's love will imply the destruction of her will, and thus, this will turn her insane, mad. Thus, Jane's connection with Bertha doe not lie in her identification as her alter ego, but rather a reminder that Jane may also follow Bertha's destiny. Jane knows that is she loses her will, out of love, in Victorian terminology, she will become mad. It is also at this period that Jane gains insight into her state of depedence and weakness.

As Small notices, Jane's reaction to the discovery of Rochester's wife does not concern the collapse of her prospective marriage but the awareness of the inequality of power with Rochester. Her will is subjugated to that of Rochester, and thus she feels morally sickened for the first time. Jane often had outbursts of rage when she was a child. She suffered from a hysterical trance in the Reeds' red room, and she voiced her disapproval of Brocklehurst's ideas in Lowood, but in all of these episodes, her reactions, or encounters with madness, arose as a result of her will. Her rage was an expression of her inner discomfort. Nonetheless, once Jane becomes aware of Bertha's existence and her husband's inner secrets, she realises not everything can be subjected to her own will. She is incapable of exerting control over everything and this is where madness begins to prevail. Actually, it is significant that

Rochester mentions, precisely, at this time, that his love for Jane would not fail even if she, Jane, were to go mad. This assumption proves crucial for two main reasons: first, it opens the possibility of identifying some signs of madness in Jane for the very first time, when most critical readings have concentrated on Bertha as the unique embodiment of insanity; and secondly, it reaffirms the difference between Bertha and Jane as separate, rather than complementary, characters, since Bertha's madness is caused through pathological sexual desire, that is moral insanity, while Jane's illness is due to the loss, and loosening, of her will. Jane's love for Rochester menaces her will to act appropiately and fall into temptation in two senses: firstly, she might decide to stay with Rochester even if aware of the impossibility of marrying him, and secondly, she might decide to succumb to Rochester's will, thus anihilating her own. In both cases, her will to do right or her will to decide would be neglected. It is at this moment of doubt that Jane begins an odyssey of madness, of temptation, that will be cured though purgation in the next stage of the novel, through St John Rivers. As Small notices, it is precisely at this moment that Jane "descends into her deepest mental crisis" (170), as some of the symptoms she presents corroborate. She internalises the Ophelian drama she has been rehearsing since her arrival at Thornfield. The "I" subject of her narrative is progressively displaced, while Jane falls into a silent trance which proves opposed to the hysterical ourbursts she experienced in the red room as a child. Her confession that Rochester had become a demi-god also implies an awakening into religious issues, but paying homage to a pagan god. In order to recover from both her mental and spiritual crises, she needs to go through a purgatory process to learn her ways again.

In any case, it is worth noticing that, either in the case of Bertha or the most recent exploration of Jane's outbursts of madness, insanity is often associated with female figures. And yet, Rochester is obviously the male master who locked his first wife in the attic, intended to commit bigamy, defied social conventions by marrying her governess, indulged in continuous flirtings in Paris during his youth, maintained a distant relation with his protegée, and acknowledged the preternatural sphere whereby he holds mesmeric conversations with Jane. In a way, Rochester is a Byronic hero, and thus, madness must be one of his most remarkable features. However, male madness is often associated with criminality, while female insanity was often perceived as related to moral abnormality. As Small wisely contends, the traditional symmetry established between Bertha and Jane is held more closely between Rochester and Bertha to the extent that Rochester more closely clings to madness in the shape of his first wife. Like Bertha, Rochester is also a slave to his past, and matching his wife's presumed sexual depravity, he spent ten years moving around Europe, indulging in flirtatious conquests.

If Rochester and Jane present traits of different types of madness, their recovery also follows different paths. At Moor House, Jane undergoes a therapeutic process to recover her will power, a state resembling that of female emotional and professional independence. Meanwhile, Rochester, through physical and psychological purgation, undergoes an opposite process which undermines the power of his will, a state resembling that of physical impotence and emotional dependence. In other words, Jane strengthens her mind through self-discipline and the pursuit of knowledge, while Rochester becomes a recluse from the world (Small 174). It is only at this point, when Jane has recovered her self-esteem and Rochester has paid for his transgressions, that both can be matched. In this sense, the language and structure of *Jane Eyre* make of its concluding marriage an emblem of intimate connection between independence and love (Yeazell 1974: 34). Similarly, Gilbert also contends that she always interpreted Brontë's story as ending with a vision of an egalitarian novel, thus giving priority to a feminist reading rather than a more reactionary domestic critical analysis (1998: 354). Actually, having both recovered their wills, their moral sanity through purgation, both Rochester and Jane are no longer in the need to keep their feelings under control. It is in this

sense that Small has lately pointed at the transcendence of the will in Brontë's novel to the detriment of a post-Freudian emphasis on the subconcious, as mainly represented through Bertha. After all, at the end of the novel, Jane recovers her voice to say "Reader, *I* married him" (my emphasis). In this sense, the novel's *Bildungsroman* pattern develops through Jane's command of her will through her personal pilgrim's progress. In this sense, *Jane Eyre* becomes more representative of the Victorian period in which it should be contextualised; an era when the awareness of the lurking past coexisted with an increasing sense of confidence; a period of inquiry and doubt, of sanity and insanity, of will and desire; a tension between forces which took effect at both a personal and national level.

At this point, it is necessary to reassess the way female madness has been interpreted through discourse analysis and critical theories, and the way the focus has shifted through the evolution of times. Postmodern theories, more adept at questioning and problematising textualities and intertextualities, seem to be in a more promising position in order to shed light onto a tradition of critical theories that have granted Bertha a higher status than the original text had originally envisioned for her. *Jane Eyre* has been interpreted as a didactic novel, a gothic text, a psychoanalytical rendering of the heroine's unconscious nature, a set of textual opposites through structuralist envisionings, a battle of classes through Jane's intermediary position, an imperialist text, and an emergent claim of feminist anger and women's rebellion. Discourse analysis and narratological tools have granted a more objective analysis of the text in order to set a balance between Brontë's original discourse and the extensive corpus of interpretations which have contributed to constructing an alternative text to that of Brontë's. Bertha's female lunacy has evolved according to times, and yet, her construction and deconstruction in both Brontë's text and subsequent critical readings betray the forging of madness as a discourse in Victorian fiction, while emergent psychological discourses easily blended with religious, moral and gendered discourses of domesticity at the time.

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